

September 29, 2000

A TRIBUTE TO THE 2000 "SPIRIT OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD" WINNERS

**HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 29, 2000*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the participants of my 2000 Spirit of Achievement Award program. In 1982, when the current citizens of the 3rd District of Illinois elected me to represent them in the United States Congress, I introduced this very successful program. Since then, every middle school in the 23rd Ward of Chicago annually selects a graduating 8th grade boy and girl who they feel represents overall outstanding academic achievement, community service and extracurricular activities. Today, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the hard work of 28 young achievers and future leaders from the 23rd Ward of Chicago.

St. Jane De Chantal School: Nora Krause and Christopher Paluch  
Our Lady of Snows School: Amanda Hartman and Jeffrey Mikula  
St. Camillus School: Amanda Kurmpel and Kevin Jasionowski  
St. Bruno School: David Szwajnos  
St. Rene Elementary School: Anthony Garcia and Catherine O'Connell  
St. Daniel the Prophet School: Deanna Maida and Paul Bruton  
St. Richards School: Monika Dlugopolski and Christopher Dyrdak  
Gloria Dei School: Faith Krasowski and Jeremiah Jurevis  
Hale Elementary School: Emily Fisher and Xavier Hernandez  
Peck Elementary School: Maribel Pantoja and Anthony Naranjo  
Dore Elementary School: Robert Bradel and Jennifer Collins  
Kinzie Elementary School: Victoria Okrzesik and Patrick Forbes  
Byrne Elementary School: Jennifer Turner and Ryan Nabor  
Twain Elementary School: Sebastian Gawenda  
Edwards Elementary School: Mustafaa Saleh and Lisa Matteson

These students are all credit to their families and the Chicago community. I wish them tremendous success in their continuing education and future aspirations. Furthermore, I charge all of them to use their strength and leadership in service to this great nation. Mr. Speaker, I am again pleased to offer my sincere congratulations to the winners of my 2000 Spirit of Achievement Award program.

HMONG VETERANS' NATURALIZATION ACT AMENDMENT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2000*

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we passed H.R. 5234, a bill to correct a technical problem with the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000, which was passed

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

by Congress and signed into law earlier this year. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak during general debate. I would however, like to add these remarks to the record to say thank you, and to further honor a little known group of individuals who routinely went above and beyond the call of duty to help American servicemen during the Viet Nam war.

Many Americans are unaware that Hmong veterans, operating out of Laos, collected critical intelligence, provided protection to remote American outposts, and routinely rescued downed American airmen. As a result of American forces in Viet Nam, these men and their families lived in constant danger of retaliation by Communist forces. Predictably, when America withdrew from Viet Nam, many Hmong families suffered and died at the hands of the Communist North Vietnamese and Laotian forces.

I was glad to cosponsor and support the Hmong people on May 2, 2000 when the House passed H.R. 371, the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000. This bill was subsequently signed into law on May 26, 2000. The law waives the English language requirement and provides special consideration for the civics requirement with respect to the naturalization of eligible Hmong veterans and their immediate families. I am equally glad that this Congress was able to resolve so quickly to correct a technical problem that was discovered in the law, which prevented some deserving Hmong individuals from gaining the citizenship that they fought so valiantly to preserve.

I am thankful that the House passed this bill unanimously under suspension of the rules, and appreciate this opportunity to raise America's awareness of these courageous people.

ITALIAN AMERICANS OF LUZERNE COUNTY HONOR CHARLES GIUNTA AS PERSON OF YEAR

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 29, 2000*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Charles A. Giunta, who has been chosen by the Italian American Association of Luzerne County as their 2000 Person of the Year. The association will honor him at their annual dinner on Oct. 8.

The officers of this fine organization are Herman Castellani, president; Judy Russo, vice president; Michael Delconte, secretary; and Leonard Cumbo, treasurer. Charlie has been a member of the association for the past six years, having served on the board of directors and other various committees.

Charles is a graduate of Pittston High School and Wilkes-Barre Business College and attended Wilkes College. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1942 to 1946, a year after the war ended. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War with the rank of captain to command the 487th Transportation Truck Company.

In addition to serving his country and the cause of freedom, he has also served his community well. He was past president of the

Columbus League of Luzerne County and was an active member of the committee responsible for obtaining and erecting the statue of Christopher Columbus that now stands in Pittston.

Charles has been an active member of the Wilkes-Barre chapter of UNICO for the past 40 years and is a past president, secretary and treasurer of the organization, in addition to having served on several of its committees.

He has also served St. Anthony's Church of Exeter as a volunteer worker in the rectory and currently serves as chairman of the church's finance committee.

Charles resides in Exeter with his wife of 55 years, the former Nancy Berto. They have three sons, Joseph, of Dallas; Samuel, of North Wales; and Charles, of State College; as well as two grandchildren, Joseph and Bridget Giunta.

Mr. Speaker, I salute Charles Giunta on the occasion of this honor, and I am pleased to call his long service to the attention of the House of Representatives.

END HEALTH DISPARITIES IN MEDICARE BASED ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 29, 2000*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, there is a large body of literature that shows people of color disproportionately lack access to health care, vital treatments, and preventive screening measures. Several of us on Ways and Means have called for a hearing to discuss differences in medical care due to race and ethnicity. Although ensuring a fair and equitable quality health care system for all Americans is extremely important, Congress has failed to address existing disparities.

Our country is becoming increasingly diverse. Currently, people of color represent an estimated 18% of our nation's residents, and will comprise more than 25% in 2050. In a state such as California, "minority" populations have already become the majority.

Among those of Medicare age, racial and ethnic minorities currently represent 16% of the population; however, by 2050, that percentage will increase to 36% at the same time that the number of elderly is expected to increase by 250%.

The growing populations of minorities, however, have not been able to eliminate the vestiges of racism—conscious and unconscious—that still remains in our society and in our institutions. The health care system is no exception. A Century Foundation Report entitled, "Vulnerable Populations and Medicare Services" by Marian Gornick contributes more strong evidence that disparities continue to exist even when individuals have similar health insurance coverage.

For example, Medicare covers influenza vaccines for beneficiaries on an annual basis at no cost. Coverage and financial costs are not barriers, but African Americans are only half as likely to receive flu shots even though influenza, a forerunner to pneumonia, is responsible for excess hospitalizations among elderly with heart and pulmonary disease.

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